

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 5097

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, AF, GW
SUBJ: WEST GERMAN ASSESSMENT OF AFGHANISTAN

1. SUMMARY: DURING A CALL JUNE 24 ON THE WEST GERMAN DCM, I ASKED HIM WHAT ASSESSMENT HIS HIGH-LEVEL FRG VISITOR, DR. HENS PETERSON, HAD REACHED ABOUT AFGHANISTAN AS A RESULT OF HIS VISIT TO KABUL LAST WEEK. THE DCM RESPONDED THAT PETERSON HAD CONCLUDED FROM HIS OFFICIAL CALLS THAT THE NEW AFGHAN GOVERNMENT SINCERELY WISHED TO REMAIN INDEPENDENT, BUT WAS NAIVE ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF ITS GROWING DEPENDENCE ON THE SOVIET UNION. END SUMMARY.

2. TO HELP BONN REACH A BETTER GRASP OF THE NEW SITUATION IN IN AFGHANISTAN, THE WEST GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTRY DISPATCHED TO KABUL DR. JENS PETERSON, CHIEF OF THEIR ASIA BUREAU, FOR A PERSONAL ASSESSMENT. ACCORDING TO THE RFG DCM (HANS-PETER DISDORN), PETERSON WAS IN KABUL SEVERAL DAYS AND CALLED ON A HALF DOZEN MINISTERS, INCLUDING PREMIER TARAKI AND FONMIN AMIN. HE WAS RECEIVED IN FRIENDLY FASHION BY ALL MINISTERS, AND ALL HAD MADE CLEAR TO HIM THEY HOPED WEST GERMANY WOULD MAINTAIN ITS ROUGHTLY \$15
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MILLION EQUIVALENT ANNUAL AID PROGRAM. PETERSON BROUGHT WITH HIM, AND DELIVERED TO FONMIN AMIN, A LETTER FROM THE RFG STATING THAT WEST GERMANY WAS WILLING TO CONTINUE ITS PRESENCE AND PROGRAMS HERE.

3. PETERSON LEFT KABUL CONVINCED THAT THE NEW AFGHAN LEADERSHIP WAS SINCERE IN DESIRING TO KEEP THE COUNTRY INDEPENDENT, BUT WAS NAIVE IN BELIEVING THAT ITS DELIBERATE POLICY OF HEAVY DEPENDENCE

ON THE SOVIET UNION CONTAINED NO THREAT OR RISK. PETERSON CONCLUDED THAT THE PRINCIPAL REASON FOR THE TARAHI REGIME'S CLOSE TIE WITH THE SOVIETS WAS AN ECONOMIC ONE -- THE TARAHI GOVT'S DESIRE TO SPEED UP ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SO AS TO SHOW THE AFGHAN PEOPLE THE NEW REGIME WAS REALLY HELPING THEM.

4. ALTHOUGH THE AFGHANS TOLD PETERSON THEY WISHED ALL RFG PROGRAMS TO CONTINUE, TWO PROGRAMS, ACCORDING TO THE RFG DCM, ARE SUBJECT TO QUESTION MARKS. ONE IS THE WEST GERMAN AID PROGRAM TO THE FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AT KABUL UNIVERSITY; THE OTHER IS RFG POLICE ASSISTANCE TO THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR. PETERSON WAS UNABLE TO GET SPECIFIC RESPONSES FROM ANY MINISTER WHETHER THESE PROGRAMS WERE TO CONTINUE. THE TRANSFER OF THE RFG POLICE ADVISERS FROM THE INTERIOR MINISTRY BUILDING OF OFFICES IN THE MORE REMOTE POLICE ACADEMY COMPOUND SUGGESTS TO THE RFG EMBASSY THAT THAT PROGRAM MAY BE IN JEOPARDY.

5. AMONG THE RFG PROGRAMS DEFINITELY TO CONTINUE IS THE WEST GERMAN PEACE CORPS ACTIVITY. THERE ARE 20 GERMAN VOLUNTEERS IN COUNTRY, MOST OF THEM LOCATED OUTSIDE OF KABUL. THE RFG EMBASSY WAS WORRIED THAT THE 4 VOLUNTEERS LOCATED AT KUNDUZ, NEAR THE SOVIET BORDER, WOULD BE ASKED TO LEAVE, BUT THEY HAVE NOW BEEN REQUESTED TO STAY. (COMMENT: THE AFGHAN GOVT'S ATTITUDE HERE IS IN CONTRAST TO THAT SHOWN OUR PEACE CORPS WHOSE FUTURE IS NOT PROMISING.)
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6. ACCORDING TO DISDORN, HIS GOVT LIKENS THE AFGHANISTAN SITUATION TO THAT OF FINLAND, EXCEPT THAT THE KABUL REGIME IS IDEOLOGICALLY PRO-SOVIET. UNTIL THE KABUL GOVT IS SEEN TO BEHAVE IN WAYS INIMICAL TO WEST GERMAN INTERESTS, BONN PLANS TO CONTINUE ITS PROGRAMS IN AFGHANISTAN.

7. COMMENT: THIS EMBASSY DOES NOT ACCEPT PETERSON'S ALLEGED CONCLUSION THAT THE PRINCIPAL REASON FOR THE TARAHI REGIME'S DEPENDENCE ON THE USSR IS TO ACCELERATE AFGHANISTAN'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. WE BELIEVE RATHER THAT THE TARAHI REGIME IS DEPENDENT ON THE SOVIET UNION BECAUSE: 1) THE REGIME'S DOMESTIC SUPPORT IS VERY THIN, 2) WITHOUT SOVIET MILIARY SUPPORT AND ECONOMIC AID, IT PROBABLY COULD NOT REMAIN IN POWER, AND 3) THE LEADERSHIP HAS A LONG-TIME AND STRONG IDEOLOGICAL AFFINITY WITH THAT OF ITS NORTHERN NEIGHBOR.
AMSTUTZ

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